

**News Headline:** Consumers say they don't want letter grade fuel stickers |  

**Outlet Full Name:** USA Today - Online

**News OCR Text:** Consumers apparently want the EPA's proposed letter grading fuel economy sticker to take a seat in the dunce chair.

The Environmental Protection Agency has given the public two options for a new fuel economy sticker: One that simplifies the performance of a vehicle to a letter grade along with some charts and data, and one that just uses the charts and data. Edmunds.com says a poll they conducted on their website shows 80% of respondents wanted the sticker that doesn't give a grade.

Remarkably, the responses are in line with what automakers are saying: The letter grade is too simplistic.

"There seems to be a viscerally negative reaction to the notion of a letter grade," said Edmunds.com CEO Jeremy Anwyl in a summary he included in a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson. "I am not wild about the letter-grading system either. I understand the attempt to simplify, but this should never extend to dumbing down."

One of the problems with the grading system is that it classifies cars by groups: Electric cars would get an A+; macho sports cars would get Ds. That makes it harder to compare vehicles by segment -- if you are going to by an electric car, wouldn't it be better to know which car was the best in that segment, and which car performed worse in that class?



Edmunds says some consumers are worried that automakers will start focusing on their letter grade, while letting overall quality slip:

Anwyl's said the EPA should consider offering buyers a figure explaining the average monthly cost to drive the car.

"We find that consumers care about emissions and MPG -- but generally make purchase commitments based on costs," he said. "Monthly fuel cost is probably the data point that is most easily comparable across vehicles."

-- Sharon Silke Carty/Drive On

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**News Headline:** Canadian company shuts down third oil pipeline |  

**Outlet Full Name:** San Diego Union-Tribune - Online

**News OCR Text:** CHICAGO — A Canadian company that is working to clean up oil spills outside Chicago and in southern Michigan has closed a third pipeline after a possible leak was found in New York.

Enbridge Inc. said a 91-mile pipeline that runs from Ontario, Canada, to New York was shut down after about a gallon of petroleum-based product was found during a sewer installation project Monday. The company said all the product has been cleaned up and crews were working to find the source.

It's the third pipeline Enbridge has shut down since July. Enbridge also owns a pipeline that leaked near Chicago last week and one from Indiana to Ontario that spilled oil into a southern Michigan waterway in July.

In Illinois, crews on Monday removed a 12-foot section of pipe at the site of a spill that has led to a spike in regional gas prices. Federal officials said it could take weeks to clean up that contamination.

A 2-inch diameter hole was found in the bottom of the pipe directly above a water main that passes perpendicular to the pipe, and two holes were found in the top of the water main, National Transportation Safety Board investigator Matthew Nicholson said.

The cause of that leak won't be known until the NTSB dissects and tests the pipe in a laboratory, Nicholson said. The problem was discovered Thursday in Romeoville by local water department workers responding to a complaint from a business owner about the water line, Nicholson said.

The 34-inch oil pipeline, which runs 465 miles from Superior, Wis., to Griffith, Ind., was 5 feet underground.

The total volume of the spill was not yet known, said Sam Borries, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's on-scene coordinator. By late Sunday, Enbridge had captured about 12,100 barrels of an oil and water mixture, about half of which was oil.

Borries said the oil that was pushed to the surface reached a retention pond and the town's wastewater treatment plant. The continuing recovery could take weeks, he said, and the company must excavate contaminated soil and test groundwater.

Gina Jordan, a spokeswoman for Calgary-based Enbridge, said it was too soon to know when the pipeline could begin moving oil again.

That determination will be made by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. A call to the agency's Midwest office was not returned Monday.

Enbridge also did not know how long it would be until the 70,000-barrel-a-day line from Westover, Ontario to

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Kiantone, N.Y., would be restarted. That line was shut down "as an abundance of caution," said Spokesman Glenn Herchak.

"We're undertaking our investigation and as soon as we determine a completion of that investigation, we'll obviously be working to get that line up and running as soon as possible," Herchak said.

The company has said it continues to treat the spill near Marshall, Mich., where at least 800,000 gallons of oil leaked into a waterway in July, "as a top priority." The company does not know when that pipeline will be restarted. A congressional hearing is scheduled for Wednesday on that spill.

The Illinois spill pushed wholesale and retail gasoline prices higher, said Tom Kloza, publisher and chief oil analyst at Oil Price Information Service.

He said wholesale gas prices in the Midwest were about 30 cents per gallon higher than the West Coast and 15 to 20 cents per gallon higher than the East Coast.

Kloza said motorists in Warren, Ind., have been stung with the biggest retail price hikes. Pump prices there have soared 34.7 cents per gallon since Sept. 1. Boyd, Ky., saw an increase of 34.3 cents per gallon in the same time, and Hillsdale, Mich. saw prices jump 32.4 cents per gallon.

Associated Press writers Carolyn Thompson in Buffalo, N.Y., and Chris Kahn in New York contributed to this report.

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**News Headline:** Crews set to continue working on oil pipeline leak outside Chicago | 📄 📧

**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Tribune - Online  
**News OCR Text:** 4:02 a.m. CDT, September 12, 2010

ROMEDEVILLE, Ill. (AP) — Crews are set to continue working on a leak from an oil pipeline near Chicago.

The leak in suburban Romeoville was discovered Thursday.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says between 200 and 600 barrels of oil were being recovered each hour as of Friday. The leak had appeared to be slowing Saturday.

Officials said they hoped they'd be able to excavate the site soon to determine the cause and exact location of the break.

The pipeline is owned by Enbridge Energy Partners, which also owns a pipeline that leaked hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil into a southern Michigan waterway in July.

A company spokeswoman said the Illinois leak doesn't appear related to the Michigan spill, but a federal official said it may be too early to tell.

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**News Headline:** Crews closing in on source of Romeoville oil pipeline leak | 📄 📧

**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Tribune - Online  
**News OCR Text:** Sam Borries, on-scene coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said Sunday that workers are "actively excavating" along the pipe to find the leak.

The leak has disrupted the supply of crude oil to refineries, causing a sharp spike in gas prices across the region. AAA says the area's average gas price jumped from \$2.89 Saturday to \$2.95 Sunday.

Nearly 200 local, state and federal workers have been onsite 24 hours a day since the leak was discovered Thursday in Romeoville.

Borries said Sunday that pipeline owner Enbridge Energy Partners has until noon Tuesday to stop the flow of oil. The EPA had initially said the deadline was Monday.

Borries says it appears that the company will make the deadline.

He estimates that 7,000 barrels of water and oil have been recovered from the site so far.

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**News Headline:** Illinois pipeline leak spilled 6,100 bls of oil |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Fresno Bee - Online

**News OCR Text:** Posted at 08:27 AM on Monday, Sep. 13, 2010

Enbridge pipeline leaks oil in Chicago suburb

Enbridge: Oil spills in Ill., Mich. not related

Oil price surges after Midwest pipeline shuts down

**EPA:** Enbridge has until Tue. to stop Ill. oil leak

**EPA** says Illinois oil pipeline leak has stopped

HOUSTON -- Enbridge Energy Partners LP said Monday an estimated 6,100 barrels of crude oil were released from a pipeline leak in Romeoville, Ill. before it could be shut down.

The Houston company, which owns the pipeline, said only a small amount of the oil escaped from the immediate area before crews corralled the spill with vacuum trucks. Most of the oil has been recovered, Enbridge said.

Enbridge reported the leak on Line 6A of the Lakehead System on Thursday. The company said the line was shut down within minutes after being discovered, and the oil pooled onto a roadway and then a retention bond. Line 6A was transporting 459,000 barrels per day of heavy crude when the leak was discovered.



The line remains shut down. The company would not give an estimate of when it would be restarted.

Paul Beaty, file

AP Photo - FILE - This Sept. 11, 2010 file photograph, shows the cleanup site where an oil spill caused by a leak in a Enbridge Energy Partners' underground pipe in Romeoville, Il. Enbridge Energy Partners LP said Monday, DSept. 13, an estimated 6,100 barrels of crude oil were released from a pipeline leak in Romeoville, Ill. before it could be shut down.

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**News Headline:** GE asks **EPA** to hold off next phase of Hudson dredging, let it finish 1st phase in 2011 |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Morning Call - Online

**News OCR Text:** 4:03 p.m. EDT, September 13, 2010

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — General Electric told federal environmental officials Monday that it should be allowed to finish the test phase of Hudson River dredging next year to collect more data, instead of starting the far larger, second phase of the massive Superfund cleanup.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has said it wanted to start the second phase of the PCB cleanup next year.

In a letter to **EPA** Administrator Lisa Jackson, GE argued that an independent review panel's findings show that it makes more sense to instead complete the unfinished Phase 1 next year. The Fairfield, Conn.-based company said data collected from dredging next year could then be used to set standards for Phase 2, which represents 90 percent of the cleanup.

"This approach would provide both **EPA** and GE with the basis to make informed decisions on Phase 2," Ann Klee, GE's vice president for corporate environmental programs wrote in her letter to Jackson.

An **EPA** spokeswoman said the agency was reviewing the letter.

Wastewater containing PCBs was discharged into the river by GE plants in Fort Edward and neighboring Hudson Falls before the lubricant and coolant was banned in 1977. PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are considered probable carcinogens.

Workers last year dredged 10 of the 18 PCB "hot spots" that had been targeted in Phase 1.

The independent review panel last week called for substantive changes to standards that govern the project, including the pace of work and levels of PCBs that dredgers stir up and resuspend into the river. The panel also said better data is needed to map the extent of the underwater contamination.

The **EPA** is reviewing the panel's report and is expected to make a decision on how to continue with Phase 2 this fall.

GE proposed that the **EPA** make that decision in November 2011, after the new data is analyzed. GE said it could

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then decide by the end of 2011 whether to perform Phase 2.

If GE refuses to perform the next phase of dredging, EPA could continue with Phase 2 and seek to recoup triple costs from GE.

GE says it has already spent about \$561 million on the dredging.

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News Headline: EPA says Illinois oil pipeline leak has stopped |  

Outlet Full Name: Seattle Times - Online

News OCR Text: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials say the leak from an oil pipeline outside Chicago has stopped.

WFLD-TV reports that an inch-and-a-half hole was found on the bottom of the 34-inch diameter pipe owned by Enbridge Energy Partners. Analysts say the leak has caused a spike in gas prices across the region.

The pipeline break was discovered Thursday in Romeoville along Enbridge's "6A" pipeline, which runs 465 miles from Superior, Wis. to Griffith, Ind.

Officials say repair of the pipe and cleanup are under way.

Enbridge also owns a pipeline that ruptured in Marshall, Mich., in July and leaked at least 800,000 gallons of oil into a waterway there.

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News Headline: Ill. oil pipeline leak stopped; cleanup under way |  

Outlet Full Name: Seattle Times - Online

News OCR Text: Crews on Monday removed a 12-foot section of pipe at the site of an oil spill outside Chicago that led to a spike in regional gasoline prices, but it could take weeks to clean up the contamination, federal officials said.

A two-inch diameter hole was found in the bottom of the pipe directly above a water main that passes perpendicular to the pipe, and two holes were found in the top of the water main, National Transportation Safety Board investigator Matthew Nicholson said.

The exact cause of the oil leak won't be known until the NTSB dissects and tests the pipe in a laboratory, he said. The problem was discovered Thursday in Romeoville by local water department workers responding to a complaint from a business owner about the water line, Nicholson said.

The 34-inch oil pipeline, which runs 465 miles from Superior, Wis., to Griffith, Ind. - and owned by the same company whose pipeline spilled oil into a southern Michigan waterway in July - was five feet underground. The oil that was pushed to the surface reached a retention pond and the town's wastewater treatment plant, said Sam Borries, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's on-scene coordinator.

He said the total volume of the spill was not yet known, but pipeline owner Enbridge Energy Partners by late Sunday had captured about 12,100 barrels of an oil and water mixture, about half of which was oil. The continuing recovery could take weeks, he said, and the company must excavate contaminated soil and test groundwater.

Enbridge spokeswoman Gina Jordan said it was too soon to know when the pipeline could begin moving oil again.

That determination will be made by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. A call to the agency's Midwest office was not immediately returned Monday.

"It's just too early to tell," Jordan said. "We're focusing on safely removing the pipe and welding in the new section."

The spill pushed wholesale and retail gasoline prices higher, said Tom Kloza, publisher and chief oil analyst at Oil Price Information Service.

He said wholesale gas prices in the Midwest were about 30 cents per gallon higher than the West Coast and 15 to 20 cents per gallon higher than the East Coast.

Kloza said motorists in Warren, Ind., have been stung with the biggest retail price hikes. Pump prices there have soared 34.7 cents per gallon since Sept. 1. Boyd, Ky., saw an increase of 34.3 cents per gallon in the same time, and Hillsdale, Mich. saw prices jump 32.4 cents per gallon.

The spill "does mean quite a bit for supply and prices over a short-term basis," because it's a big line, capable of carrying 670,000 barrels a day of crude, Kloza said. "If you shut off an artery, you will have consequences."

Enbridge also owns a pipeline that ruptured in Marshall, Mich., in July and leaked at least 800,000 gallons of oil into a

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waterway there. A congressional hearing is scheduled for Wednesday on that spill.  
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News Headline: GE asks EPA to let it continue dredge tests in '11 |  

Outlet Full Name: State - Online, The  
News OCR Text: ALBANY, N.Y. General Electric told federal environmental officials Monday that it should be allowed to finish the test phase of Hudson River dredging next year to collect more data, instead of starting the far larger, second phase of the massive Superfund cleanup.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has said it wanted to start the second phase of the PCB cleanup next year.

In a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, GE argued that an independent review panel's findings show that it makes more sense to instead complete the unfinished Phase 1 next year. The Fairfield, Conn.-based company said data collected from dredging next year could then be used to set standards for Phase 2, which represents 90 percent of the cleanup.

"This approach would provide both EPA and GE with the basis to make informed decisions on Phase 2," Ann Klee, GE's vice president for corporate environmental programs wrote in her letter to Jackson.

An EPA spokeswoman said the agency was reviewing the letter.

Wastewater containing PCBs was discharged into the river by GE plants in Fort Edward and neighboring Hudson Falls before the lubricant and coolant was banned in 1977. PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are considered probable carcinogens.

Workers last year dredged 10 of the 18 PCB "hot spots" that had been targeted in Phase 1.


The independent review panel last week called for substantive changes to standards that govern the project, including the pace of work and levels of PCBs that dredgers stir up and resuspend into the river. The panel also said better data is needed to map the extent of the underwater contamination.

The EPA is reviewing the panel's report and is expected to make a decision on how to continue with Phase 2 this fall.

GE proposed that the EPA make that decision in November 2011, after the new data is analyzed. GE said it could then decide by the end of 2011 whether to perform Phase 2.

If GE refuses to perform the next phase of dredging, EPA could continue with Phase 2 and seek to recoup triple costs from GE.

GE says it has already spent about \$561 million on the dredging.  
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News Headline: PA Responds to Enbridge Oil Spill in Illinois |  

Outlet Full Name: Wisconsin Ag Connection  
News OCR Text: - 09/13/2010 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emergency response personnel were deployed to Romeoville, Ill., Thursday afternoon to investigate and respond to an oil spill from a pipeline owned by Enbridge Energy Limited Partnership. The company notified the National Response Center about the incident at 1:20 p.m. Thursday.

"EPA, state and local agencies mobilized immediately to respond to this incident and we are taking steps to minimize damage to the environment and to protect the DesPlaines River," said U.S. EPA Regional Administrator Susan Hedman. "We have many questions about this incident and we expect prompt answers from Enbridge."

Initial assessments indicate that crude oil from the pipeline flowed through sewers into a retention pond at 719 Parkwood Avenue near Route 53. The pipeline has been shut down.

"This is the second Enbridge pipeline spill this summer in the Midwest," said Hedman. "EPA is still actively managing the clean up of an Enbridge pipeline spill that caused major damage to the Kalamazoo River in late July."

EPA -- and Enbridge, at the Agency's direction -- will take action to contain and clean up the Romeoville oil spill. Other responders include the U.S. Coast Guard, Illinois EPA, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police, Village of Romeoville, Romeoville Fire Department and Will County Emergency Management.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 designates EPA as the lead agency responsible for responding to inland oil spills.

More from this state at:

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Headline: GOP mulls plan to stymie EPA climate regs at Senate markup |  

Outlet Full Name: Hill - Online, The

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**News OCR Text:** - 09/13/10 08:58 PM ET

Senate Republicans may offer plans Thursday that would block looming EPA climate change rules when the Senate Appropriations Committee marks up EPA's annual spending bill.

An amendment to thwart EPA could gain traction on the panel, which includes five Democrats who have backed proposals to delay or scuttle limits on greenhouse gases from power plants and other sources. Passage would be a political setback for Obama administration policies to limit heat-trapping emissions.

A spokesman for Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), who is on the panel and opposes EPA rules, said no decisions have been made yet about an amendment.

It's not clear when Murkowski will return from Alaska, where she's mulling a write-in campaign following her stunning GOP primary loss to Tea Party favorite Joe Miller.

Robert Dillon, the spokesman, said Murkowski remains concerned about the economic impact of EPA regulations.

Sen. Kit Bond (R-Mo.), asked whether he would offer an amendment, said Monday that "we will look at all options."

"We will see what, if anything, we do," he told reporters in the Capitol.

The Senate in June turned back Murkowski's plan that would have stripped EPA's power to regulate greenhouse gases. The vote was 47-53. But three Democrats who voted for her proposal – Sens. Mary Landrieu (La.), Ben Nelson (Neb) and Mark Pryor (Ark.) – are members of the Appropriations Committee.

In addition, Nelson along with committee Democrats Tim Johnson (S.D.) and Byron Dorgan (N.D.) are co-sponsors of Sen. Jay Rockefeller's (D-W.Va.) bill that would delay EPA rules governing stationary industrial emitters for two years.

While it is not clear what may be offered at the markup, appropriations riders are often written to block federal agencies from spending money to implement a policy for one year.

But they can be renewed – Congress blocked expanded offshore drilling for decades by limiting Interior Department leasing annually through spending bills. The bans were allowed to lapse in 2008.

Dorgan told reporters that he's not aware of any amendment plans at the markup, but noted that he supports a pause in EPA's rules, which begin kicking in for large emitters next year.

"I do think it makes sense to have some time here to have Congress make the ultimate decision, rather than EPA," he said in the Capitol Monday.

Rockefeller has said that Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has promised him a vote on his bill this year. Rockefeller said he would prefer a vote before the elections. "I just think generally it's a better climate than the lame duck," he told reporters Monday.

He said an appropriations bill could emerge as a vehicle.

The White House opposes plans to stymie EPA's climate rules, and environmental groups have made protecting EPA's power their top goal now that climate change legislation has collapsed in the Senate.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/118545-gop-mulls-plan-to-stymie-epa-climate-regs-at-senate-markup>

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**News Headline:** Environmentalists want 60 mpg by 2025 |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Lexington Herald-Leader - Online

**News OCR Text:** The strategy for reducing the smog, soot and global warming pollutants belched from car and truck exhaust pipes has focused largely on increasing the miles these vehicles get per gallon.

Federal Environmental Protection Agency and Transportation officials are expected to release their proposals to reduce vehicle pollutants and increase fuel efficiency by the end of the month. Groups including the National Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists already have a goal - they want cars and trucks to achieve an average 60 mpg by 2025.

The groups are set to announce a national campaign to promote this standard and to push federal officials to adopt it. Current standards call for an average 35 mpg for cars and trucks by 2020. To see what the standards are now, and to learn more about the complicated system of tradeoffs that allows manufacturers to produce SUVs with lower mpg ratings, visit <http://icsw.nhtsa.gov/cars/rules/CAFE/overview.htm>.

Similar stories:

Commentary: A move toward fuel efficiency

If the United States hopes to secure its energy future and reduce its reliance on imported oil, it must stop being a gas hog on the

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road.

Currently, the United States consumes 22 percent of the world's oil, with roughly half of that needed to produce motor fuels for cars and trucks. This wasteful consumption of fossil fuels is costly to our economy and dangerous for public health and the environment. To chart a new course, we must build smarter communities and transit systems and drive cleaner and more efficient vehicles.

On Thursday, the Obama administration took a step in that direction by adopting new standards for automobile fuel economy and greenhouse emissions. The standards mirror those adopted by California in 2004 that were fought fiercely, and unsuccessfully, by the auto industry.

Hyundai makes eye-catching family sedan

The 2011 Hyundai Sonata sedan is selling at a record pace, and why not? With styling that makes the new, sixth-generation Sonata look richer than its under-\$20,000 base price, the Sonata is arguably the most stylish of America's mainstream family sedans.

It has more trunk room and cubic-foot passenger volume than the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord, and it's fuel efficient, too. In fact, the 2011 Sonata has more horsepower - 198 generated from a direct-injection, four-cylinder engine - than the comparable four-cylinder-powered Camry, Accord, Nissan Altima and Ford Fusion sedans.

And none of the major Sonata competitors has Hyundai's generous 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty and five-year/60,000-mile new vehicle warranty with unlimited-mileage roadside assistance.

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**News Headline:** Edmunds.com Sends EPA Results of New Car Window Sticker Poll |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Thomson Reuters - Online

**News OCR Text:** SANTA MONICA, Calif.--(Business Wire)--

When the Environmental Protection Agency invited the public a few weeks ago to comment on two proposed redesigns of the traditional new car window sticker, Edmunds.com, the premier online resource for automotive information, launched a poll to determine which sticker is preferred by car buyers. The poll and other related materials can be found at <http://www.edmunds.com/advice/fueleconomy/articles/165127/article.html>.

More than 80 percent of respondents preferred "Sticker 2," which provides a clearer and more complete set of information, rather than the simple letter grade featured in the "Sticker 1" proposal. From the comments collected in the poll, it appears that many respondents actively voted against "Sticker 1" rather than for "Sticker 2." For example, one person wrote, "Let's present facts, not positive/negative connotation without context."

"There seems to be a viscerally negative reaction to the notion of a letter grade," observed Edmunds.com CEO Jeremy Anwyl in a summary he included in a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson earlier today. "I am not wild about the letter-grading system either. I understand the attempt to simplify, but this should never extend to dumbing down. What does the letter actually mean? The EPA should use this as an opportunity to think more broadly about how the stickers can really help consumers buying vehicles today rather than in the very different era when EPA window stickers were first conceived."

In the 1970s when the EPA sticker originated, consumers obtained vehicle information by driving from dealer to dealer, asking questions and getting brochures. The sticker played a useful role as a provider of information at the point of decision. But today, consumers largely make decisions about which vehicle to buy before visiting the dealership.

Edmunds.com believes that the EPA can add great value by providing the standards behind the data so that consumers can truly benefit from the development of this valuable policy. The new stickers should cover all vehicles, ensuring apples-to-apples comparisons even across vehicle categories (to assist people considering both SUVs and pick-up trucks, for example.) It should also be clear what the data does not cover, such as the environmental impacts of manufacturing and transporting the vehicle.

And, critically, the EPA should mandate how automakers will be allowed to use the data. One of the survey respondents noted, "Auto companies will start making incredibly fuel-efficient cars to get an A grade, which is good, but the over-all quality of the car itself could be lowered." Someone who voted for Sticker 1 commented, "If changing consumer buying habits is one of the goals here, then the 'letter-grading version' will be more successful," perhaps foreseeing the potential marketing opportunity that the letter grade would

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provide.

Anwyl's final point to Administrator Jackson was that "it would also make things easier for consumers if the information is expressed in terms of monthly cost. We find that consumers care about emissions and MPG - but generally make purchase commitments based on costs. Monthly fuel cost is probably the data point that is most easily comparable across vehicles."

Anwyl further discusses the EPA window sticker redesign proposal in his blog at <http://justtoclarify.typepad.com/my-blog/2010/09/so-what-about-the-new-epa-stickers.html>.

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**News Headline:** Issue roils as EPA has last hearing on fracking |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Buffalo News - Online

**News OCR Text:** ALBANY — The oil and gas industry is urging the federal Environmental Protection Agency to keep a narrow focus in its study of how a drilling technique that involves blasting chemical-laced water into the ground may affect drinking water — while environmental groups want the study to cover everything from road building to waste disposal.

The issues are scheduled to be aired today in two-minute speaking slots during an EPA hearing twice postponed last month because of security concerns over rallies and crowds anticipated in the thousands.

The hearing, the last of four across the country, will continue with two sessions Wednesday at the Forum in Binghamton. The EPA is taking comment on how broadly to construct its study of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a technique for releasing natural gas from rock formations thousands of feet underground by injecting at high pressure millions of gallons of water mixed with chemicals and sand.

Congress directed the EPA to take a new look at fracking as gas drillers swarm to the lucrative Marcellus Shale region beneath Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia and Ohio and other shale reserves nationwide. Concerns that the process can poison private wells and water aquifers have driven opposition, while the industry insists there's no evidence linking fracking to any contaminated water sources.

Just last week, the EPA asked nine major gas-drilling companies to voluntarily disclose the chemicals used in fracking. Drilling companies, calling their chemical formulas proprietary, have largely sought to avoid that disclosure.

Fracking is specifically excluded from regulation under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, in part because of a widely quoted 2004 EPA study concluding that the process posed no threat to sources of drinking water. That study was widely criticized for, among other things, its narrow focus on coal bed methane deposits and its lack of independent field studies.

Environmental groups hope the new EPA study will validate their position that there are many risks that need to be addressed by federal regulators. Beyond the fracking process itself, concerns have risen from environmentalists over the long-distance hauling, treatment and disposal of the resulting wastewater.

"We want the new study to be free of political and special-interest influence and based on science," said Craig Michaels, watershed program director for Riverkeeper, an environmental group whose stated mission includes safeguard-

ing the drinking water supply of New York City and the lower Hudson Valley. "We want it to look not only at the fracturing of the well, but the whole life cycle of drilling operations from road building to waste disposal and everything in between."

Gas-drilling advocates oppose taking a broad view.

"Congress asked the EPA to look at a specific thing, which was the potential impact of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water sources," said Stephanie

R. Meadows, a senior policy adviser of the American Petroleum Institute. "That's where the focus and the limited dollars that EPA has been given to do this should remain."

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Industry groups oppose having fracking regulated at the federal level, which API acknowledges would be more costly.

“We don't see the need for another level of oversight,” Meadows said. “States have the authority to regulate this and have been doing that effectively for the last 60 years.”

Even if the EPA study doesn't lead to new federal regulations, the information gathered will help states improve their own regulations, said Katherine Nadeau, a program director of Environmental Advocates, an Albany group that says it tries to protect air, land, water and wildlife and the health of all New Yorkers.

“That's why it's so important that they be as thorough as possible,” said Nadeau, whose group is urging the EPA to look at the impact of natural gas exploration on air quality, communities, ecosystems and waterways, as well as on drinking water.

“We would be able to use the scientific results from these studies to set up better water and community protections here in New York as well as nationwide,” she said.

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**News Headline:** Rallies precede Binghamton EPA hearing |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Ithaca Journal - Online

**News OCR Text:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's two-day hearing on its study of the hydraulic fracturing process is poised to kick off this morning at The Forum in downtown Binghamton, closing streets and drawing protesters.

People on both sides of the issue held press conferences prior to the hearing's noon start.

Sign-carrying environmentalists, including Binghamton Mayor Matthew Ryan, gathered on South Washington Street at 10 a.m. and spoke out against drilling this morning. Ryan advocated using a green alternative to hydrofracturing. The rally, which continues, has drawn about 300 people. The pro-drilling rally has drawn similar numbers.

This morning, the pro-drilling camp chanted "Pass gas!" The anti-drilling camp countered with loud chants of "No fracking way" and "Kill the draft." Dimock, Pa., residents held up a jug of dirty water, saying: "This came out of our tap after drilling started."

Howie Hawkins, the Green Party gubernatorial candidate, and Cecile Lawrence an Apalachin woman running for U.S. Senate on the Green Party line, are holding a news conference now at the intersection of Henry and Washington streets, calling for an outright ban on hydrofracking for natural gas.

On the other side of the issue, drilling proponents are discussing the positive benefits of natural gas production at the Regency Hotel. They include Alex Parillo of Laborers Local 785 and John Conrad, president and hydrogeologist with Conrad Geoscience Corp., among others.

America's Natural Gas Alliance Executive Vice President Tom Amontree also issued a statement this morning, saying that hydraulic fracturing has been used for 60 years and has a proven track record. “We are confident that a scientifically sound and data-driven examination will provide policymakers and the public with even greater reassurance of the safety of this longstanding practice,” he said.

An hour before the event's noon start, people began to file into the Forum to find a seat.

Four hundred people will have the opportunity to speak to a panel of EPA researchers during the sessions today and Wednesday. Each speaker is limited to two minutes of testimony.

A couple of thousand more are expected to attend, including landowners, environmentalists and industry representatives.

The EPA is holding the hearings, the last of four nationwide, to receive public input on the scope of its study on the potential effect hydrofracking may have on groundwater. Fracking is a natural-gas drilling technique in which a mix of sand, water and chemicals is blasted deep underground to break up shale and release the gas. The agency is looking for insight on what the highest priority of the study should be, as well as where the gaps in public knowledge are, and suggested locations for a case study.

The 400 speakers — 300 of whom were held over from the original list of registrants for the Aug. 12 meeting at Binghamton University, which was postponed — will include a variety of stakeholders, including several public officials slated for the early Monday session. Those confirmed to speak include Congressmen Maurice Hinchey and Michael Arcuri, Broome County Executive Barbara J. Fiala, and Binghamton Mayor Matthew T. Ryan.

Others confirmed to speak include Joint Landowners Coalition of New York President Dan Fitzsimmons, Toxics Targeting President Walter Hang, and Mike Doyle, executive director of the New York State Petroleum Council.

While no hearings are scheduled Tuesday — the day of primary elections in New York State — Windsor filmmaker Aaron Price will hold a free screening of “Marcellus Shale Voices” at 7 p.m. at Binghamton's Holiday Inn. Price also will show his film “Gas Odyssey.” Drilling supporters are expected to attend.

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**News Headline:** Fewer people attend hearing than expected |  


**Outlet Full Name:** Ithaca Journal - Online

**News OCR Text:** Crowd estimates seemed off Monday morning as folks from across the region descended upon The Forum in Binghamton for the state Environmental Protection Agency's public meeting about hydraulic fracturing.

Initial estimates indicated approximately 8,000 people would attend the event. By 2:30 p.m., only about 700 people were in attendance.

For a brief time, it appeared as though there were more police, emergency personnel and media camped outside The Forum.

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**News Headline:** As Senate Returns, Democrats Seek Action on Energy Measures |  

**Outlet Full Name:** New York Times - Online

**News OCR Text:** While the Senate seems unlikely to approve an energy bill during the few weeks it reconvenes before the November elections, it may consider measures on U.S. **EPA** climate rules, power plant pollution curbs and energy tax incentives.

A blog about energy and the environment.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) last week acknowledged that the Senate's chances of passing sweeping or even scaled-back climate legislation this year are dead, but he held out hopes for moving forward on a slimmed-down energy package. But amid election-year politics and an already-crowded legislative calendar, consideration may be punted until a lame-duck session.

Reid last week said small business legislation will top the chamber's agenda this month. And aides say such a move will leave little time for consideration of an energy bill before November.

"We are only in for a few weeks when we reconvene next week, and while we are still mapping out the schedule, energy legislation ... may have to wait for a lame-duck session," Reid spokesman Jim Manley said last week.

Still, Reid suggested last week that a narrow energy bill could see floor action before the election. "I think we should take a run at it," he said during a clean energy meeting in Las Vegas. "Even Washington is ready for that, so I'm going to try."

The energy bill will likely include incentives for natural gas vehicles and the "Home Star" energy efficiency retrofits program, two measures Reid has indicated he supports. Both measures were included in a slimmed-down energy and oil spill-response package that Democrats introduced just before recess, but that bill -- and a Republican counterpart -- were pulled from floor consideration after Democrats failed to find enough support for passage.

The bill also could include a provision establishing a renewable electricity standard (RES). Language establishing a national standard was once considered a shoo-in for a Senate climate bill, but hopes were quashed in July when leaders pulled the language from the scaled-back energy bill.

Reid backs such a provision, and Manley said last week that an RES was still a possibility for the fall.

Reid has also promised to bring oil spill-response legislation to the floor this fall, but Manley said that, too, likely won't happen until after the election.

Democrats began the year with high hopes of passing broad climate and energy legislation, similar to the bill that passed in the House last summer. But those plans were whittled away amid political pressures, and ultimately, the chamber punted on considering even an oil spill-response bill that many had seen as the bare minimum the Senate would consider this summer.

That measure addressed a number of issues in response to the BP PLC oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, but language that would eliminate oil companies' liability in a spill caused a major sticking point for Republicans and oil-state Democrats and contributed to Reid's decision to pull the bill from floor consideration.

Sens. Mark Begich (D-Alaska) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.) offered up **separate** liability proposals as alternatives to Reid's language, and Reid indicated last month he is willing to compromise with the senators in crafting language.

Begich and Landrieu say their **separate** but similar proposals would ensure small- and mid-sized oil companies can continue to operate offshore.

Rockefeller looks to hamstring climate rules

With climate legislation likely off the table, opponents of the Obama administration's greenhouse gas rules are plotting efforts to handcuff **EPA**'s climate regulations, while environmentalists gird to protect the agency's authority.

The most immediate challenge to **EPA**'s climate rules is expected to come from Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), who has said he

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will seek a vote this year on his bill that would block the agency from regulating stationary sources' emissions for two years. Rockefeller told reporters in July that Reid promised a vote on the measure before the November election.

Manley declined to comment Friday as to whether Reid would allow a vote on the bill. But Reid told reporters in June that he would hold a vote on the measure before the end of the year (E&ENews PM

Reid promised the vote in order to siphon Democratic support away from a more sweeping resolution from Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), according to a Senate Democratic aide. Murkowski's resolution fell just four votes short of the 51 it needed to clear the chamber, and several moderate Democrats who voted against the measure said they favored Rockefeller's approach (E&ENews PM

Rockefeller has six Democratic co-sponsors, including North Dakota Sens. Kent Conrad and Byron Dorgan, South Dakota Sen. Tim Johnson, Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Sen. Ben Nelson of Nebraska and Virginia Sen. Jim Webb. Rockefeller would need to win the support of at least 12 more Democrats in addition to 41 Republicans to push the measure through the Senate.

But if Rockefeller's bill comes up for a vote, several senators may bring up an alternative aimed at draining support from it.

Sens. Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Bob Casey (D-Pa.) for several months have considered offering a countermeasure to stymie EPA climate regulations. Their provision would be very similar to EPA's "tailoring" rule that would exempt small sources from EPA climate rules while allowing the agency to regulate the largest polluters, a Senate aide told E&E Daily in May (E&E Daily

For more news on energy and the environment, visit [www.greenwire.com](http://www.greenwire.com).

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**News Headline:** ANGA Statement on EPA Public Meeting on Hydraulic Fracturing Study |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Thomson Reuters - Online  
**News OCR Text:** WASHINGTON, Sept. 13

WASHINGTON, Sept. 13 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Background: America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA) Executive Vice President Tom Amontree issued the following statement on the last of four meetings held by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to take public comments on the scope of its study on hydraulic fracturing. This meeting is being held today and Wednesday in Binghamton, New York.

"The natural gas community appreciates EPA's efforts to solicit public comment on its hydraulic fracturing study. The practice has been used for 60 years, on over a million wells with a proven track record. We are confident that a scientifically sound and data-driven examination will provide policymakers and the public with even greater reassurance of the safety of this longstanding practice.

"The natural gas community believes people should not have to choose between jobs and economic opportunities, and their environment. Natural gas is a clean, abundant and domestic energy source that has created 2.8 million American jobs.

"When used to generate electricity, natural gas emits half the CO2 emissions of coal, 80% less nitrogen oxides and virtually no sulfur dioxide, mercury or particulate matter. New York is a net importer of 95% of its natural gas and is the nation's fourth largest natural gas consumer.

"Meanwhile, the state sits atop what is widely believed to be the second largest natural gas field in the world, with the potential to bring New York more than \$11 billion in economic activity through 2020.


"We can develop this resource, and we can do it in a safe and responsible way."

America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA) represents 34 of the nation's leading independent natural gas exploration and production companies. ANGA members are dedicated to increasing the appreciation of the environmental, economic and national security benefits of clean, abundant, American natural gas. Learn more about ANGA at [www.anga.us](http://www.anga.us).

SOURCE America's Natural Gas Alliance

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**News Headline:** EPA holding upstate NY hearings on gas drilling |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Washington Post - Online  
**News OCR Text:** BINGHAMTON, N.Y. -- Hundreds of people are gathering outside a theater in Binghamton, N.Y., ahead of what is expected to be a pair of contentious public hearings on a federal study of a natural gas-drilling technique.

People opposed to hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," have signs saying "Kids can't drink gas," while those supporting

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the method are chanting "Pass gas now!" The Environmental Protection Agency is holding four-hour hearings at The Forum in Binghamton beginning at noon and again at 6 p.m. Two more sessions are scheduled for Wednesday.

The EPA is taking comment on how broadly to construct its study of fracking. The drilling technique involves blasting chemical-laced water into the ground to release natural gas from rock formations thousands of feet underground.

THIS IS A UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - The oil and gas industry is urging the Environmental Protection Agency to keep a narrow focus in its study of how a drilling technique that involves blasting chemical-laced water into the ground may affect drinking water - while environmental groups want the study to cover everything from road-building to waste disposal.

The issues will be aired Monday in two-minute speaking slots at an EPA hearing twice postponed last month because of security concerns over rallies and crowds anticipated in the thousands.

The hearing, the last of four around the country, will be held in two sessions on Monday and two more on Wednesday at The Forum in Binghamton, 115 miles southwest of Albany. The EPA is taking comment on how broadly to construct its study of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a technique for releasing natural gas from rock formations thousands of feet underground by injecting at high pressure millions of gallons of water mixed with chemicals and sand.

Congress directed the EPA to take a new look at fracking as gas drillers swarm to the lucrative Marcellus Shale region beneath Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia and Ohio and other shale reserves around the country. Concerns that the process can poison private wells and water aquifers have driven opposition, while the industry insists there's no evidence linking fracking to any contaminated water sources.

In Wyoming, which also has large shale reserves, the EPA has told residents in Pavillion, a farming and ranching area, not to drink water from about 40 nearby wells. Residents speculate their water supplies have been polluted by fracking, but the EPA's tests have been inconclusive.

Just last week, the EPA asked nine major gas drilling companies, including Halliburton Co., Key Energy Services Inc. and Schlumberger Ltd., to voluntarily disclose the chemicals used in fracking. Drilling companies, calling their chemical formulas proprietary, have largely sought to avoid that disclosure. Others that received information requests from the EPA include BJ Services Co., Complete Production Services Inc., Patterson-UTI Energy Inc., RPC Inc., Superior Well Services Inc. and Weatherford International Ltd.

Fracking is specifically excluded from regulation under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, in part because of a widely quoted 2004 EPA study that concluded the process posed no threat to drinking water sources. That study was widely criticized for, among other things, its narrow focus on coalbed methane deposits and its lack of independent field studies.

Environmental groups hope the new EPA study will validate their position that there are many risks that need to be addressed by regulators at the federal level. Beyond the fracking process itself, concerns have risen from environmentalists over the long-distance hauling, treatment and disposal of the resulting wastewater. "We want the new study to be free of political and special-interest influence and based on science," said Craig Michaels, watershed program director for Riverkeeper, an environmental group whose stated mission includes safeguarding the drinking water supply of New York City and the lower Hudson Valley. "We want it to look not only at the fracturing of the well but the whole life cycle of drilling operations from road building to waste disposal and everything in between." Gas drilling advocates oppose taking a broad view. "Congress asked the EPA to look at a specific thing, which was the potential impact of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water sources," said Stephanie Meadows, a senior policy adviser of the American Petroleum Institute. "That's where the focus and the limited dollars that EPA has been given to do this should remain." Industry groups oppose having fracking regulated at the federal level, which API acknowledges would be more costly. "We don't see the need for another level of oversight," Meadows said. "States have the authority to regulate this and have been doing that effectively for the last 60 years." Even if the EPA study doesn't lead to new federal regulations, the information gathered will help states improve their own regulations, said Katherine Nadeau, a program director of Environmental Advocates, an Albany group that says it tries to protect air, land, water and wildlife and the health of all New Yorkers. "That's why it's so important that they be as thorough as possible," said Nadeau, whose group is urging the EPA to look at the impact of natural gas exploration on air quality, communities, ecosystems and waterways as well as on drinking water. "We would be able to use the scientific results from these studies to set up better water and community protections here in New York as well as nationwide." The Natural Resources Defense Council, which says it combines the grass roots power of 1.3 million members with the expertise of more than 350 lawyers, scientists and other professionals, is urging the EPA to conduct numerous field studies in communities where known or suspected water contamination has been reported, such as Washington and Bradford counties in Pennsylvania.

NRDC senior attorney Kate Sinding said she would speak Monday about the need to do mapping studies of rock formations before and after fracking occurs to evaluate the potential for migration of contaminants through new and existing cracks.

Groups representing New York landowners with gas leases, frustrated by the slow pace of a Department of Environmental Conservation review of issues surrounding natural gas exploration in the Marcellus Shale region, want the EPA to keep its study narrow and finish it quickly.

The DEC has had permit approvals on hold since it started its review in July 2008, and some politicians and

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environmental groups want permitting further held up until the EPA study is complete. "The hidden agenda of environmental groups is to delay it as long as possible," said Noel van Swol, president of the Sullivan-Delaware Property Owners Association. "This is all-class warfare on the part of weekenders and Hollywood types from New York City who want to keep this area as their playground and drive out those of us who have lived here all their lives." He called the natural gas industry "the last best hope for this region," where jobs are in short supply and farms are struggling to survive.

The industry contends gas drilling has already brought millions of dollars in tax benefits and thousands of jobs - with promises of thousands more - in the vast Marcellus Shale region. Geologists say the Marcellus could become the nation's largest natural gas field.

Michaels said Riverkeeper would present the EPA with a report that documents "significant environmental impacts from natural gas drilling, including hydraulic fracturing." "I'm not sure there's any form of energy production that's completely risk-free," Michaels said. "But people are realizing that they're being exposed to dangers that they shouldn't be. People shouldn't have to sacrifice clean air and water for a clean energy supply."

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**News Headline:** Yes, accept EPA nitrogen, phosphorous levels |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Tribune - Online

**News OCR Text:** Florida has an ugly problem.

What feeds our lawns and sugar cane fields also fuels the scum that clogs waterways, and Floridians are collectively over-feeding the scum. There are too many examples: blue-green algae smothering rivers, lakes and canals; high piles of putrid-smelling drift algae along beaches; shorelines covered with dead fish, turtles and manatees from red tides; diminished sea grass and coral beds, fisheries and waterfowl populations in every part of the state.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, or FDEP, concluded in 2008 that over 1,000 miles of rivers and streams, 350,000 acres of lakes, and 900 square miles of estuaries in our state are impaired by nutrients. That means that half of our rivers and more than half of our lakes are sick from high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous. That also means that Floridians living along those water bodies are suffering too; waterfront economies, property values, drinking water supplies, human health and quality of life are negatively impacted.

How did this happen? Over time, our ways of life have released enough nitrogen and phosphorous into the environment to overload our water bodies. Our lakes, rivers and estuaries can no longer digest the extent of our nutrient pollution; drop by drop they have reached the tipping point and the result is the overgrowth of harmful algae.

Who is to blame? Finger pointing won't work — every one of us contributes to the problem. We all release nitrogen and phosphorus into the environment. It runs off over-fertilized and untimely-fertilized landscapes in our neighborhoods. It is discharged from wastewater treatment plants. It is a by-product of animal and food production agriculture.

How do we fix the problem? Like the blame, the responsibility for the cure must be shared by all Floridians. Luckily, the answers are within our reach.

A lawsuit filed and settled in federal court by environmental groups to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to impose quantifiable and enforceable nutrient pollution limits — or numeric nutrient criteria — will soon bring our state a badly needed tool. These limits will identify the tipping point for our water bodies and provide the threshold below which nitrogen and phosphorous levels must remain in order to keep them healthy. We cannot flesh out the measures needed to sufficiently reduce nutrient levels until we have these limits, and in as much, cannot adequately address the problem without numeric nutrient criteria.

No one community or industry is solely responsible for the problem, rather, a new approach to managing nitrogen and phosphorous will be required of all.

At the neighborhood level we know what is immediately effective and comes at little or no cost to taxpayers — strong urban fertilizer management. For this reason, communities along the Gulf Coast devastated by the Red Tide blooms of 2005 were the first in Florida to adopt strong fertilizer ordinances. Communities all over the state and nation are now following suit; strict urban fertilizer management has been proven to substantially reduce nutrient pollution and decrease the need for more costly pollution controls.

For example, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program established a model fertilizer ordinance that codifies the pollution prevention recommendations found in the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Handbooks published by FDEP and the University of Florida since 1994. With 50 percent compliance, the Tampa Bay estuary model ordinance would prevent an estimated 30 tons of nitrogen per year from entering Tampa Bay from Hillsborough County alone. Those 30 tons prevented would offset the annual nitrogen discharge from five wastewater treatment plants, thereby saving taxpayer dollars from being spent on additional wastewater treatment.

And we do have room for improvement in wastewater. Too many wastewater treatment plants in Florida are allowed to dump inadequately filtered and treated effluent. And spray fields in North and Central Florida need expanded treatment to prevent the groundwater contamination that is literally killing springs and rivers.

However, most treatment systems would only need add-on modification and the costs would be phased in over several years. Claims to the contrary, that wastewater improvements will cost families hundreds of extra dollars each year, are not based on Florida's reality but rather on the cost of reverse osmosis (turning sea water to fresh water) — something needed in Saudi Arabia, but not necessarily here in the Sunshine State.

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In animal and food production, like at the residential landscape level, nitrogen and phosphorous lost to stormwater is fertilizer wasted. Agricultural best management practices for keeping nutrients on the farm and out of our water resources have been promoted for years by the state's department of agriculture. Broad adherence to best management practices can curb agriculture's share of the nutrient pollution problem. Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson said it best in a letter to Florida's agricultural industry this past May: "Implementing [best mangement practices] not only protect and conserve Florida's water resources, but may save you time and money through more efficient nutrient and irrigation management practices."

When the EPA determined that numeric nutrient limits were necessary in Florida, Secretary of FDEP Mike Sole said it well: "The State of Florida recognizes that more needs to be done to address nutrient pollution in our rivers, streams, lakes and estuaries, and these actions will help our State and all of our stakeholders prevent and better manage sources of nitrogen and phosphorus from entering our waters."

Those utilities and industries that continue to make preposterous arguments against nutrient pollution limits ignore the obvious question; if not now, when? The longer we wait, the greater the problem will get and the more expensive the clean up will become for all of us.

Cris Costello is the regional representative for the Sierra Club.

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**News Headline:** EPA told gas drilling does, does not taint water |  

**Outlet Full Name:** Miami Herald - Online, The  
**News OCR Text:** BINGHAMTON, N.Y. --

"There are numerous reports of water contamination related to hydraulic fracturing in states across the country," said Hinchey, D-N.Y. "Despite the fact that EPA is, in many ways, precluded from taking regulatory action in response to these reports, I believe EPA must investigate to understand what is being done - to keep water supplies safe and secure."

The process, also known as fracking, blasts millions of gallons of water mixed with sand and chemicals, some of them carcinogens, deep into the earth to free gas from dense shale deposits. As a gas rush sweeps parts of the vast and lucrative Marcellus Shale region that underlies New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, environmentalists are concerned for the watershed that provides drinking water for 17 million people from Philadelphia to New York City.

Environmentalists fear the process, which leaves as much as 90 percent of the post-fracking water known as "produced water" deep underground, will irreversibly taint aquifers.

No water supplies have been poisoned by fracking, the petroleum industry says, and the process - which promises lucrative industry profits and thousands of jobs in economically depressed areas - is safe.

"Billions of dollars in economic impact on New York and its citizens is at stake here," said Brad Gill of the Independent Oil and Gas Association, with drilling promising more than 60,000 jobs in New York alone. "The positive impact is staggering but it doesn't come at the expense of environmental protection."

John Harmon of the New York-New Jersey African American Chamber of Commerce said full development of the Marcellus Shale would create 280,000 jobs over the next 10 years, jobs sorely needed in the black community

"This is not the time to further limit energy job opportunities for those in need," Harmon said

Congress has ordered EPA to conduct a new fracking study and EPA is considering how broadly to construct it, since the agency's 2004 study that declared the technology safe was widely criticized as flawed. The earlier study had enabled passage of 2005 energy legislation exempting fracking from federal regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act, leaving regulation to individual states.

"The EPA must do all it can to insure that its scientists and researchers are not influenced by industry or by politics as they were influenced back in 2004," Hinchey said, "so that the public can be assured that this study is being carried out in the public interest."

Hinchey is one of the authors of the so-called FRAC Act in Congress, which would put fracking under EPA regulation.

The petroleum industry is strongly opposed to federal regulation - which it says would be more costly than complying with adequate state rules.

Gill said "strict state regulations" for decades have governed fracking and the industry has "a stellar environmental record" to show for it.

In New York, he said, there are about 14,000 producing natural gas wells, thousands of which were begun by the fracking process. New York has not seen one case of groundwater contamination by fracking fluids, he said.

"A Hollywood actor holding a glass of cloudy water proves nothing except that fear-mongering and emotion will always trump science and logic," he said, taking aim at the recent critical TV documentary "Gasland," by Josh Fox.

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